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## **Quality of Democracy in Des Sidodadi Ramunia Through Political Participation of New Voters in the 2024 General Election**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indonesian elections serve as a fundamental manifestation of democracy and a mechanism through which citizens assert their sovereignty over the state and government. The engagement of novice voters in Sidodadi Ramunia Village during the General Election offers a compelling area of study. New voters often exhibit distinct characteristics compared to older generations, such as being more critical, independent, and dissatisfied with the status quo, with a propensity for change. These traits are conducive to fostering a well-informed electorate, characterized by voters who make rational and considered choices.

This study focuses on novice voters in Sidodadi Ramunia Village, who are anticipated to sustain their political engagement. Their continued participation in the democratic process is crucial for advancing Indonesia's democracy. Ideally, these new voters will make informed decisions based on acquired knowledge and ethical considerations, free from any manipulative influences.

The research methodology employed is qualitative, involving interviews and literature reviews from various journals. Qualitative methods are valuable for providing a thorough and nuanced examination of phenomena. The research findings are presented descriptively and qualitatively, with data derived from interview transcripts and articulated in narrative form rather than numerical terms. The research findings indicate that government entities, educational institutions, community organizations, and mass media play a crucial role in delivering comprehensive political education to first-time voters. This can be achieved through civic education programs, open forums for discussion, and the dissemination of accurate and readily accessible information.

**Keywords: Elections, New Voters, Democracy**

### **ABSTRAK**

Pemilihan umum di Indonesia merupakan manifestasi mendasar dari demokrasi dan mekanisme di mana warga negara menyatakan kedaulatannya atas negara dan pemerintah. Keterlibatan pemilih pemula di Desa Sidodadi Ramunia selama Pemilihan Umum menawarkan area studi yang menarik. Pemilih baru sering kali menunjukkan

karakteristik yang berbeda dibandingkan dengan generasi yang lebih tua, seperti sikap yang lebih kritis, mandiri, dan ketidakpuasan terhadap status quo, serta kecenderungan untuk perubahan. Karakteristik ini mendukung pembentukan pemilih yang terinformasi dengan baik, yaitu pemilih yang membuat keputusan yang rasional dan dipertimbangkan.

Penelitian ini berfokus pada pemilih pemula di Desa Sidodadi Ramunia, yang diharapkan dapat mempertahankan keterlibatan politik mereka. Partisipasi mereka yang berkelanjutan dalam proses demokrasi sangat penting untuk kemajuan demokrasi Indonesia. Idealnya, pemilih baru ini akan membuat keputusan yang terinformasi berdasarkan pengetahuan yang diperoleh dan pertimbangan etis, tanpa pengaruh manipulatif. Metodologi penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif, melibatkan wawancara dan tinjauan pustaka dari berbagai jurnal. Metode kualitatif berharga untuk memberikan penelitian yang mendalam dan nuansa terhadap fenomena. Temuan penelitian disajikan secara deskriptif dan kualitatif, dengan data yang diperoleh dari transkrip wawancara dan disusun dalam bentuk naratif, bukan dalam bentuk numerik.

Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lembaga pemerintah, institusi pendidikan, organisasi masyarakat, dan media massa memiliki peran penting dalam memberikan pendidikan politik yang komprehensif kepada pemilih pemula. Hal ini dapat dicapai melalui program pendidikan kewarganegaraan, forum terbuka untuk diskusi, dan penyebaran informasi yang akurat serta mudah diakses.

**Kata Kunci: Pemilu, Pemilih Pemula, Demokrasi**

## **INTRODUCTION**

General elections represent a fundamental aspect of democracy, where all segments of society participate in electing leaders, officials, or other candidates through a ballot or voting process. These elections are critical as they epitomize the essence of democratic governance and provide the most tangible form of public involvement in state administration. The focus on the system and execution of general elections is crucial, as optimizing these processes is essential for establishing a truly democratic government that aligns with public expectations. Essential attributes of general elections include being direct, universal, free, secret, honest, and fair (Luber-Jurdil). Elections serve as a mechanism for realizing popular sovereignty and for political leaders to obtain legitimacy.

To qualify for participation in general elections, individuals must be Indonesian citizens aged 17 or older and possess an ID card. A citizen eligible to vote can only exercise this right if they are registered as a voter. First-time voters, who are voting for the first time due to reaching the eligible voting age of 17 to 21 years, may have knowledge about elections similar to other groups, but they often differ in enthusiasm, participation, and political perspectives. Political preferences reflect an individual's tendencies and inclinations toward political activities, including voting, decision-making, and active participation in governance. Typically, first-time voters are students with stable financial situations, residing predominantly in urban areas. The advancement of information technology has positively impacted this group, who are adept at using various technical devices such as cell phones, laptops, and tablets, and are proficient in navigating social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. They tend to be open to new ideas, critical, and independent.

Currently, novice voters face significant challenges due to political changes,

dynamics, and internal issues lacking clear direction. The pressures of globalization, free trade, terrorism, and international intervention pose substantial challenges for young voters as they navigate and form their political viewpoints. Interventions from both the government and societal actors have led to various social issues, sometimes undermining democracy in Indonesia. Understanding the diverse nature, background, experiences, and challenges faced by first-time voters is essential for preparing informed, critical, and progressive future leaders. These novice voters will play a crucial role in shaping Indonesia's future, particularly as the nation approaches its centennial in 2045. The ongoing existence and development of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia will largely depend on the choices made by these first-time voters.

The significant impact of first-time voters on elections is evident in the strategies employed by political parties and candidates. This trend is not new; recent election cycles have seen an increased focus on attracting young voters, with many campaigns now targeting their votes. The low level of political education among novice voters requires particular attention, as insufficient understanding makes them susceptible to manipulation by special interests. Historical patterns reveal that first-time voters may be swayed by candidates through advertising and social media without a deep comprehension of their choices.

In the electoral process, every vote is crucial, with even a single vote potentially determining the outcome of an election. Given that first-time voters constitute a substantial portion of the electorate, they become a key target for political factions. To engage these voters, political parties and candidates often deploy advertisements and propaganda. Additionally, youth-oriented communities have been established to engage this demographic, aiming to spark their interest in political parties and candidates, encourage their participation in elections, and ultimately secure a substantial number of votes.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Political Participation**

Political participation refers to the active engagement of individuals or groups in the political sphere, which includes voting for state leaders and influencing government policies, either directly or indirectly (Budiarjo, 2008). Forms of political participation encompass various activities such as voting in general elections, attending public meetings, joining political parties or interest groups, and, in some cases, engaging in acts of protest or violence (Huntington & Nelson, 1976).

### **First-time Voters and Political Participation**

First-time voters are individuals exercising their voting rights for the first time in a general election. This group typically includes citizens who have recently reached the legal voting age or those who have not previously participated in voting for various reasons. The political participation of first-time voters is significant as it can reflect the interests and aspirations of the younger generation regarding the democratic process (Furlong & Cartmel, 2011).

### **Factors Influencing the Political Participation of New Voters**

Several factors can affect the political participation of first-time voters, including:

1. Political education (Verba et al., 1995)
2. Political socialization from family and social environment (Hyman, 1959)
3. Trust in democratic institutions (Putnam, 2000)

4. Access to information and media (Norris, 2001)
5. Issues that engage first-time voters (Franklin, 2004)

### **Quality of Democracy and Political Participation**

Political participation serves as a crucial indicator for assessing the quality of a country's democracy. Higher levels of citizen participation generally signify a more robust democratic system (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). Elevated political participation indicates greater involvement and concern among citizens regarding decision-making and policy formulation processes.

### **METHOD**

The research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing both interviews and literature reviews from various journal articles. Qualitative methods are effective for providing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of a phenomenon. In this study, the findings are presented descriptively and qualitatively, with data derived from interview transcripts and organized narratively, rather than numerically. Descriptive research involves collecting, processing, presenting, and analyzing data to address descriptive problems. This study is based on interviews with several novice voters in Sidodadi Ramunia Village, and the collected data was analyzed and presented in descriptive word form.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Political Participation of New Voters**

Political participation is a critical component in fostering a robust and enduring democratic system. First-time voters, who are exercising their voting rights for the first time, play a significant role in shaping a country's policy direction. They represent a younger generation engaged in the democratic process. Data from the General Election Commission (KPU) indicates that the turnout of first-time voters in the 2024 Legislative Election was lower than overall voter participation. Independent surveys attribute this low participation rate to insufficient political education and a lack of interest in public issues.

The low engagement of first-time voters in the 2024 elections raises serious concerns about the future of democracy in Indonesia. Since the younger generation is vital for the nation's future, their active participation in political processes is essential for fostering a just and progressive society. To enhance the political involvement of first-time voters, a more systematic and sustained effort is required from various stakeholders. Governments and educational institutions should integrate political education into school curricula from an early age. Additionally, social media and digital platforms must be effectively utilized to reach tech-savvy young voters.

Political parties and candidates also need to adjust their strategies to resonate with younger voters. Prioritizing issues such as quality education, job opportunities, environmental policies, and civil rights can attract first-time voters. By addressing their concerns, political parties can gain greater support from the younger demographic. The engagement of first-time voters is not only crucial for the immediate health of democracy but also represents an investment in its future. Their active involvement promises a more responsive and adaptive political landscape. Therefore, efforts to boost their participation should be continually supported to achieve a fairer, more prosperous society.

### **The Role of First-Time Voters in Upholding Democratic Quality in Sidodadi Village**

Democracy is a governance system that grants supreme authority to the people, allowing them to select leaders and shape policies through elections. Therefore, the role of voters, including first-time voters, is pivotal in determining the quality of democracy. First-time voters, who are casting their ballots for the first time, generally comprise the younger generation—an essential group for the nation's future.

These new voters embody the aspirations of a generation eager for change and innovation. Their participation can significantly influence the direction of state policy for the coming years. Thus, their involvement is crucial for maintaining the quality of democracy. By introducing new perspectives and issues relevant to young people, first-time voters can invigorate political discourse and counterbalance conventional politics, which often caters to elite interests.

In Sidodadi Village, the involvement of first-time voters can renew the democratic process's legitimacy. Their engagement ensures that democracy does not remain the domain of an older generation increasingly disconnected from contemporary realities. New voters can infuse the democratic process with fresh ideas and energy. Investing in their political engagement early on fosters a habit of participation that will persist into adulthood, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability and quality of democracy.

To maximize their impact, first-time voters in Sidodadi Village need enhanced political literacy. Adequate political education will enable them to make informed decisions based on rational considerations rather than emotional or primordial biases. Furthermore, access to accurate information about candidates' visions and missions must be ensured. The government should also facilitate their involvement by providing accessible voting locations and meeting citizens' voting rights across regions. In a dynamic modern democracy, the role of first-time voters is indispensable for maintaining and enhancing democratic quality. Their participation will help democracy not only endure but also evolve positively over time.

### **Ensuring Fair Elections and Integrity in Sidodadi Village**

Data from the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) indicates an increase in violations and fraud during the 2024 Legislative Election compared to previous elections. Common violations include money politics, misuse of state resources, and smear campaigns. Regions with higher violation rates often coincide with lower levels of poverty and education. Although the General Election Commission (KPU) and Bawaslu have implemented measures such as strengthening oversight, educating the public about election rules, and enforcing strict penalties, these efforts have not fully prevented violations or ensured election integrity.

The rising incidence of election fraud threatens the integrity and legitimacy of Indonesia's democratic process. Practices such as money politics and misuse of state resources undermine fair elections and do not reflect the true will of the electorate. To address these issues, increasing political education and public awareness about fair elections and integrity is crucial. The government and relevant institutions must enhance outreach and political awareness campaigns, particularly in high-risk areas. Additionally, the mass media and civil society organizations play a vital role in disseminating information and monitoring the election process.

Strict and consistent enforcement of laws against election violations is also

necessary. Severe penalties should be imposed on those involved in fraudulent activities to deter such practices and restore public confidence in the electoral process. Strengthening the monitoring and verification system, including the use of modern technology like electronic voting and forensic audits, can enhance transparency and accountability.

Achieving fair and integral elections is a collective responsibility involving all national elements. Government bodies, election management institutions, political parties, the media, civil society organizations, and the public must collaborate and commit to preserving the integrity and legitimacy of the democratic process. With dedicated and sustained efforts, the aspiration for honest, fair elections reflecting the people's will can be realized.

## **CONCLUSION**

Political participation encompasses a range of activities through which individuals and groups engage directly or indirectly to influence government policies that affect their interests. For students, who represent a segment of novice voters, political education serves as an essential process for understanding governance and state affairs. This demographic's lower political engagement makes them vulnerable to manipulation by interest groups. The forms of political participation for first-time voters include voting, campaigning, and engaging in discussions on political issues. Supporting factors for their political participation often include the availability of political incentives.

New voters play a pivotal role in sustaining democratic processes. They embody the aspirations of the younger generation, who will eventually take on leadership roles. Their active participation in elections demonstrates their political maturity and awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities. In Sidodadi Village, for example, the engagement of novice voters is crucial for advancing local human resources and adapting to technological and societal changes. To boost participation among first-time voters, coordinated efforts from various sectors are necessary. The government, educational institutions, community organizations, and the mass media must collaborate to provide thorough political education. This can be achieved through civic education programs, open discussions, and the dissemination of accurate and accessible information.

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